

BIG BROTHER AND THE SECOND AMENDMENT

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 2, 1995

Mr. BAKER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced legislation to eliminate the new regulatory authority of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms [BATF] to ban firearms without congressional approval. You will certainly recall that last year, the Clinton crime bill authorized the BATF to enforce a ban on 19 semiautomatic guns while granting the BATF the discretion to ban additional firearms in the future without congressional approval.

Most people don't realize that along with the 19 semiautomatic firearms that are banned specifically by the assault weapons ban, the Clinton crime bill gives the BATF broad authority to define what other firearms qualify as assault weapons and then to ban these rifles, shotguns, and pistols as well without further congressional approval.

On May 16, 1994, I, and many of you, voted against the assault weapons ban, which passed the House of Representatives by a narrow vote of 216 to 214. As with every gun control measure, I voted against the ban because it does nothing to keep felons off the streets and behind bars, and it serves only to infringe upon the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens. In my opinion, giving BATF and the Clinton administration the blanket authority to ban more guns was the worst part of the crime bill. The legislation I introduced today would repeal this authority and close the open door to BATF to ban further guns.

I am proud to introduce this legislation today with the bipartisan support of 12 other original cosponsors. As continued opponents of gun control efforts in Congress, we want you to know that this legislation was introduced in the hope that we can scale back recent efforts that hand over this dangerous amount of control to a bureaucratic agency—an agency which crime bill supporters have entrusted to tell the American people which firearms they can and cannot have. We believe that this is simply too much power that will no doubt be abused in the coming months by BATF unless we work to repeal it in Congress.

As a member of the new Republican majority in the House, I want you to join me to scale back the gun control measures enacted under this administration. Let us make history by stepping forward to ensure the permanent protection the second amendment, which has protected the American people for 218 years.

INTRODUCTION OF THE JOB CREATION AND INVEST IN AMERICA ACT OF 1995

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 2, 1995

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, we and seven other members of the Progressive Caucus today are introducing one of the 11 bills of the

Progressive Caucus Alternative—The Progressive Promise—to the Republican Contract With America. Our legislation will create at least 1 million new jobs for unemployed Americans in each of the next 2 years by rebuilding our Nation's highways, bridges, mass transit, and other physical infrastructure and by investing in job training and expanded services for the most needy in our society.

This major jobs bill goes to the heart of the sweeping legislative package that the 33 members of the Progressive Caucus unveiled 2 weeks ago as the only comprehensive legislative alternative brought forth in the Congress so far that charts a positive alternative course of policy action to the Republican Contract With America.

More specifically, our ambitious jobs bill will provide \$63.6 billion in new investments to stimulate the national economy during fiscal years 1996 and 1997. It is fully paid for by eliminating tax loopholes that reward U.S.-based multinational corporations for investing abroad and exporting U.S. jobs and through targeted progressive tax increases that will fall principally upon the unearned income of upper-income Americans.

Beginning in the 1940's and reaffirmed by the Humphrey-Hawkins Act in 1978, Federal law has deemed 4 percent unemployment as the hallmark of a strong and stable economy. But now we are confronted with a Republican welfare reform plan that abandons our national commitment to training and providing jobs for millions of unemployed Americans who desperately want to work and attain some small measure of economic security for themselves and their families.

The members of the Progressive Caucus believe that it is cruel, short-sighted, and counterproductive to enact welfare reform legislation without providing jobs for millions of unemployed Americans who are ready, willing, and eager to be a part of the mainstream American economy.

Furthermore, we believe that fundamental fairness dictates that upper-income Americans who have received the biggest tax cuts during the last 15 years, as well as highly-profitable multinational corporations that have enriched themselves by investing huge sums of increasingly scarce capital to manufacture overseas and to take advantage of cheap, unprotected foreign labor, pay their share to retool and rebuild our Nation to compete more effectively in the 21st century.

Full employment is what America is about. It is our promise to ensure that every American has a job with an adequate income that enables individuals and families to join in the American dream. No one that is willing and able to work should be denied that opportunity or should have to work 40, 50, or 60 hours a week and still live in poverty.

This is not a new concept. It was the centerpiece of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Economic Bill of Rights," proposed in 1944 as part of his last State of the Union Message. In it he called for jobs for everyone willing and able to work. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognize work as a basic human right.

One in every 10 American families now puts food on the table only with the aid of food stamps. Tens of millions more survive on bare subsistence, from paycheck to paycheck. Mil-

lions have fallen into unemployment or underemployment.

In more and more abandoned neighborhoods in America, a lack of jobs, income, education, and hope has created an extraordinary climate of savagery and violence surpassing that of many communities in third world countries.

In 1978 with the passage of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, the U.S. Congress made a promise to Americans. Congress made a contract with America for full employment, where the national unemployment rate was not to exceed 4 percent.

Before we move on the Republicans' Contract With America and balance the budget on the backs of poor, hard-working Americans, we have an obligation to carry-out a 50-year-old promise for full employment. Five decades ago, our national leaders recognized what is still true today: that there are numerous economic and social costs to the Nation without full employment. Those costs were stated in the Humphrey-Hawkins legislation. Without full employment we are:

Depriving our nation of the full supply of goods and services, the full utilization of labor and capital resources, and the related increases in economic well-being that would occur under conditions of genuine full employment;

Lacking sufficient output of goods and services to meet pressing national priorities;

Depriving workers of job security, income skill development, and productivity necessary to maintain and advance their standards of living;

Exposing many families to social, psychological, and physiological costs, including disruption of family life, loss of individual dignity and self-respect, and the aggravation of physical and psychological illnesses, alcoholism and drug abuse, crime and social conflicts;

Undermining Federal, State and local government budgets by deficits due to shortfalls in tax revenues and increases in expenditures for unemployment compensation, public assistance, and other recession-related services in the areas of criminal justice, alcoholism, drug abuse, and physical and mental health.

Depriving businesses, especially small businesses, of the production, sales, capital flow, and productivity necessary to maintain adequate profits, undertake new investment, create jobs, compete internationally, and contribute to meeting society's economic needs.

These days, more people at work is bad news for the economic pundits and financial speculators. Declining unemployment should be good news. Too many of those who do have work are employed in low-wage or dead-end jobs. Statistics reveal that in the first half of last year, for instance, 27 percent of all new jobs were in the temporary-help industry, and a further 26 percent were part-time. Less than half of the new jobs were private sector, non-temporary jobs. Manpower, Inc., the leading provider of temporary workers, is now the largest private employer in America.

If we look at wages we again see the decline in well-paying, permanent jobs. In the Reagan-Bush eighties, the hourly pay of four-fifths of the American workforce declined. The typical worker was paid 4.9 percent less than at the start of the decade. No wonder workers in the United States slipped from 1st to 13th